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REPORT

TO THE

Bellingham Rural District
Council

Northumb

For the Year 1956



J. M. McEWAN, M.B., Ch., D.P.H.
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

REPORT

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BY

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

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*To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council
of Bellingham*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1956.

The social conditions of the area present little change. There has again been a slight increase in the population, associated with the development of the new forests. There are now forestry villages at Kielder, Byrness and Stonehaugh, and while housing conditions and sanitation are good, such other social services as schools, churches and shops have still to be provided. It is a pity to have to record that the North Tyne branch of the railway was closed for passenger traffic during 1956, further adding to the hardship of workers in the district. Every attempt was made to keep the line open, but it was uneconomic and was closed. Road communications in the area are not good, especially in winter, and the buses replacing the trains provide an infrequent service. It does seem that more thought should be given to amenities in the villages and satisfactory transport, if rural life is to continue.

The building of new houses in the area is virtually at a standstill. The Council were anxious to build more houses at Wark to replace poor property, but even with subsidy, the rents would have been beyond what most prospective tenants would be willing to pay. In the absence of new building, as much as possible is being done to improve existing property, and the Council are generous in giving improvement grants. As water supply and sewage facilities extend, more houses are capable of being brought up to modern standards, and improvement grants are of the greatest help. Improvements are also aided under the Hill Farming Act.

Most of the area is supplied with mains water by the Newcastle & Gateshead Water Company, and it is only where the cost of providing mains water would be prohibitive that springs continue to be used. The Ministry approved during 1956 the extension of mains water to Rochester, and a supply to Kirkwhelpington is under consideration. With the Wark and Bellingham sewage schemes completed towards the end of 1956, and the schemes for Birtley and Otterburn at the

Ministry, there is no major sewage scheme outstanding. Some small villages will require minor schemes, and the Council has decided that such schemes shall be provided by their own staff.

The vital statistics show only slight changes from 1955. The birth rate is above the national average, the death rate below the national average. There were no infant deaths. The causes of death show no unusual trends—over half the deaths were due to diseases of the heart or circulation—and the average age at death is high.

The infectious disease returns call for little comment, being small in number and diverse in nature. Three cases of poliomyelitis occurred in the area, one being notified from hospital. The cases were in different parts of the area, and though they were close together in time, no direct contact between cases was traced. The control of this disease presents great difficulty, and prevention by immunisation appears to offer the best hope for the future. The first of the children were immunised during 1956.

The new Food and Drugs Act and Food Hygiene Regulations came into force on the 1st January, 1956. Their application to the Bellingham area has had to be lenient, because to enforce the standards in small villages would lose the village its only shop. In the larger villages the improved standards have been applied. The special returns on food hygiene required by the Ministry are included in the Senior Public Health Inspector's part of this report.

In presenting this Report, I have to acknowledge the interest the members of the Council take in the work of my department, and to record that in housing and sanitation Bellingham has achieved a standard beyond that of many more populous areas. I am indebted to the Clerk and the other officers for their co-operation and to the staff of the Health Department for continued loyalty and efficiency.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. M. McEWAN,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS

Population

The population of the Rural District, estimated at 30th June, 1956, was 5,770. This is an increase of 280 on the previous year, and continues a slow rise in population.

Birth Rate

There were 99 live births during 1956, and when an adjustment factor is applied this gives a birth rate of 19.39 per 1,000 population, while the figure for England and Wales is 15.7 per 1,000. There were 2 still births during the year, giving a rate of 19.8 per 1,000 total births. The national figure is 23.0 per 1,000.

Infant Mortality

There were no deaths of infants under one year. The infant mortality rate for England and Wales is 24.9 per 1,000.

Death Rate

A total of 60 deaths occurred during 1956, a decrease of nine on the figure for 1955. This gives a crude death rate of 10.39 per 1,000 population. The figure for England and Wales is 11.7 per 1,000 population.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Measles

There was one case of measles during the year.

Poliomyelitis

Three cases of poliomyelitis, all paralytic, occurred during the year. Indirect contact between two cases was established, but no direct contact.

Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria

Two cases of Scarlet fever occurred, and diphtheria was again absent, as it has been for a number of years.

Tuberculosis

There were four notifications of infectious disease, two pulmonary and two non-pulmonary. There were no deaths.

The only other infectious diseases notified were one case of puerperal pyrexia and one case of meningococcal infection.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

The area of the Bellingham Rural District is 246,645 acres.

The estimated population for 1956 is 5,770.

The number of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1956, was 1,695.

The sum represented by a penny rate is £312.

The rateable value is £74,980.

HEALTH SERVICES

Laboratory Facilities

Facilities in the area continue to be provided by the Government Laboratory in Newcastle General Hospital, which gives an efficient service.

Ambulance Service

The local ambulance service is administered for the County Council by the Red Cross, and a satisfactory service is maintained. In addition to the ambulance, a car service is available for suitable cases and is of considerable value in such a large district.

Home Nursing and Health Visiting

The district nurses are all provided with cars and their nursing work continues to be excellent. In spite of the difficulty of arranging for suitable help in a country district the Home Help Service run by the County Council continues to function satisfactorily. The County Health Visitors work in harmony with the General Practitioners in the area and do much valuable work.

Maternity and Child Welfare

Four Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, staffed by the County Council, operate at Bellingham, Otterburn, Kielder and Wark. Immunisation against diphtheria is carried out at these centres or is done by the General Practitioners, while all vaccination is carried out by the General Practitioners.

TABLE I

The following table shows the principal statistics for the year 1953-1956.

Year	Live Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	General Death Rate per 1,000 Population	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births
1953 ..	20.00	12.20	54.95
1954 ..	20.46	11.20	21.74
1955 ..	19.93	11.30	20.6
1956 ..	19.39	10.39	Nil

ANNUAL RETURNS OF FOOD POISONING

NOTIFICATIONS, YEAR 1956

Food Poisoning Notifications Returned to Registrar General

1ST QTR.	2ND QTR.	3RD QTR.	4TH QTR.	TOTAL
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Outbreaks due to indentified agents	..	..	..	Nil
Outbreaks of undiscovered cause	..	..	..	Nil
Single Cases:				
Agent identified	..	..	..	Nil
Unknown cause	..	..	..	Nil
		Total	.. ..	Nil

TABLE II.

Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1956.

Notifiable Disease				Males	Females	Totals
Scarlet Fever	..	..	..	I	I	2
Whooping Cough	..	..		—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	..	..		2	—	2
Measles	..	..	..	—	I	I
Diphtheria	..	..	..	—	—	—
Acute Pneumonia	..	..		—	—	—
Dysentery	..	..	..	—	—	—
Smallpox	..	..	..	—	—	—
Acute Encephalitis	..	..		—	—	—
Enteric or Typhoid Fevers	..			—	—	—
Erysipelas	..	..	..	—	—	—
Meningococcal Infection		..		I	—	I
Puerperal Pyrexia	..	..		—	I	I
Ophthalmia Neonatorum		..		—	—	—
Tuberculosis	..	..	..	2	2	4
Totals				6	5	11

TABLE III.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1956.

Age Periods	New Cases				Nett Deaths in Bellingham Rural District			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0— I	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
I— 5	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—15	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—25	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35	..	I	I	—	—	—	—	—
35—45	..	—	—	I	—	—	—	—
45—55	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65	..	—	I	—	—	—	—	—
65 & over	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	..	I	I	I	—	—	—	—

The following table classifies deaths according to their age groups :—

Age Groups	Males	Females	Totals
0— 1	—	—	—
1— 9	1	—	1
10—19	—	—	—
20—29	1	—	1
30—39	2	—	2
40—49	3	—	3
50—59	1	3	4
60—69	8	—	8
70—79	10	11	21
80—89	10	7	17
90—99	—	3	3
	36	24	60

INFANT MORTALITY
during year ending 31st December, 1956
NIL.

ANALYSIS OF DEATHS BY CAUSES.

According to Registrar General's Classification.

Causes of Death	1955		1956	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory ..	—	—	—	—
2. Tuberculosis, other	—	—	—	—
3. Syphilitic disease	—	—	—	—
4. Diphtheria	—	—	—	—
5. Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—
6. Meningococcal infections ..	—	—	—	—
7. Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—
8. Measles	—	—	—	—
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	—	—	—
10. Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	1	—	—	—
11. Malignant Neoplasm, Lung and Bronchus	—	—	1	—
12. Malignant Neoplasm, Breast ..	—	2	—	2
13. Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus ..	—	—	—	—
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	5	3	6	—
15. Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	—	—	—	—
16. Diabetes	—	—	—	—
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system	4	6	5	7
18. Coronary disease, Angina ..	10	4	3	1
19. Hypertension with heart disease	—	2	2	1
20. Other heart disease	9	5	3	8
21. Other circulatory disease ..	1	3	3	—
22. Influenza	—	—	—	—
23. Pneumonia	3	—	—	1
24. Bronchitis	—	—	2	1
25. Other diseases of respiratory system	—	—	—	1
26. Ulcer of Stomach & Duodenum	2	—	1	—
27. Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	—	—	—	—
28. Nephritis and Nephrosis ..	1	—	1	1
29. Hyperplasia of Prostate ..	—	—	—	—
30. Pregnancy, Child Birth, Abortion	—	—	—	—
31. Congenital Malformations ..	—	—	—	—
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	2	1	5	—
33. Motor vehicle accidents ..	1	—	2	—
34. All other accidents	2	2	2	1
35. Suicide	—	—	—	—
36. Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—	—
	41	28	36	24
	Total 69		Total 60	

Public Health Inspector's Annual Report

FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1956

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE AREA WATER

The implementation of the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Order, 1950, is now showing results. The idea that water is a luxury no longer exists and the operation of this Order ensures, to an increasing extent in this scattered rural area, that the supply of this essential commodity is properly administered and supervised and that proper care is maintained to safeguard the consumer. It is interesting to record that the Water Survey carried out for the Northumberland County Council for the whole of Rural Northumberland by Mr. C. H. Spens, M.I.C.E. (one of the Minister's Engineering Inspectors) in the summer of 1949, contains recommendations with respect to this Rural Area. Six connections to the Rede pipeline were suggested. Five of these have now been completed :—1, Byrenss ; 2, Otterburn ; 3, West Woodburn ; 4, Reedsmouth ; 5, Wark—the remaining one at Rochester should be completed early 1957.

The provision of new private supplies to isolated properties has made steady progress during the year—some twelve new supplies have been provided.

Water Samples

Nine samples for bacteriological examination were taken and one proved unsatisfactory. This is apart from regular and systematic sampling by the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Local Authority

New schemes at Bellingham and Wark were brought into operation during the period under review. Disposal of sludge is by arrangement with local farmers at a nominal charge.

Private Septic Tanks

Nineteen treatment plants have been installed.

Conversions

Some twenty-nine conversions have been carried out from privies to water carriage system.

HOUSING

Local Authority building : Nil. Private building : 1.
HOUSING ACT, 1949 : Improvement—Reconditioning.

Twenty-three applications for improvement grants were approved. During the year, financial assistance to grant aided schemes completed amounted to £5,345.

HILL FARMING AND LIVESTOCK REARING ACTS, 1946-1954.

A further fifteen grants were approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Regular and systematic cleansing of the main settlement groups throughout that area has been maintained.

The areas covered are :—

Bellingham	Wark	Ridsdale
Reedsmouth	Stonehaugh	Bavington Great & Little
Greenhaugh	Birtley	Rochester
Kirkharle	Falstone	Otterburn
Kirkwhelpington	Kielder	Woodburn East & West
		Byrness

Number of properties serviced : 1,380.

Tips. There are nine tips in the area situate at :

Birtley	Woodburn	Bells Burn, Kielder
Otterburn	Falstone	Crookbank
Hareshaw	Knowesgate	Blakehopeburnhaugh

Employees : Two loader-drivers and three loaders.

Tonnage for year : 3,102 tons.

SALVAGE

A long term contract for the disposal of waste paper operates with the Thames Board Mill Ltd.

Collected during the year :

	<i>Tons</i>	<i>Cwts.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>
Mixed paper ..		2	1
Fibreboard containers	2	16	1
Books and magazines	3	18	3
Newspapers	3	14	3
Total ..	10	12	0

Receipts for the year : £42 7s. 5d.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

One operator is in the employ of the Council and methods of treatment are those approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Treatments

Sewers : Regular and systematic treating in Bellingham, Woodburn and Wark.		
Farms and Business Premises	....	4
Tips	.....	4
Other properties	.....	10
Total	.....	18

FOOD

PUBLIC HEALTH (MEAT) REGULATIONS, 1924-1954.

SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS ACT, 1933-1954.

There are five butchers in the area—three operate slaughterhouses and two buy carcass meat. 100% meat inspection is maintained.

Analysis of inspection is as under :

Bullocks ..	123	
Heifers	154	
Calves	2	
Pigs	155	
Sheep	593	Total : 1,027.

Condemned :

Bovine	Sheep	Pigs
23 livers	Nil	7 pairs lungs
11 pairs lungs		1 liver
6 heads and tongues		

These statistics reveal an increase in carcase meat consumption of 17.4% on the previous year 1955.

Byelaws as to Sanitary Conditions and Management of Private Slaughterhouses were adopted on the 26th October, 1956, applicable to this Rural District.

Other foods examined and found unfit for human consumption :

4 tins of Ham (47 lbs.)	26 tins of Fruit
10 tins of Luncheon Meat	38 tins of Cocoa

FOOD HYGIENE REGULATIONS, 1955-56.

Some fifty six premises in the area come within the scope of this legislation. Owners and occupiers have been interviewed on numerous occasions and the legislation explained in detail. Personal contact has been used as the foundation of co-operation rather than punitive action.

Food Premises : The following are the types of food premises in the district.

Bakeries	2
Butchers	5
Cafes	6
Clubs	4
Fried Fish	1
General Dealers (including Grocers, etc.)	18
Public Houses	11
School kitchens.....	9

ANTHRAX ORDER, 1938.

This Order is operated by the County Constabulary, and during the year notification was received of two cases of Anthrax at farms within the District. The farms were visited and human contacts were kept under observation until all risk of contracting the disease was passed.

SUMMARY OF WORKS EFFECTED

	By Informal Action	By Statutory Notice	Total
SANITARY CONVENIENCES—			
Privies and privy ashpits abolished ..	29	—	29
Water closets provided	36	—	36
Number of above for which grant was given (P.H.A. 1936, Sec. 47)	1	—	1
Sanitary bins provided.....	18	—	18
DRAINAGE—			
New drains constructed	92	—	92
Drains repaired or reconstructed	26	—	26
Additional gullies provided	368	—	368
Old gullies replaced	10	—	10
Scullery sinks provided	97	—	97
Scullery waste pipes repaired	3	—	3
Scullery waste pipes trapped	5	—	5
Yards repaired or reconstructed	14	—	14

INSPECTIONS AND VISITS

Housing :

Demolition	48
Improvements and repairs	545
Verminous premises	4
Water Supply	38
Drainage	231
Factories and Workshops	28
Licensed Premises	27
Refuse Collection and Disposal	149
Rodent Control.....	17
Infectious Disease	26
Slaughterhouses	506
Shops	156
Fishmongers (van)	6
Bakeries	37
Milk Samples	6
Ice Cream Samples	5

